ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROJECT TO STABILIZE FORT WASHINGTON
FORT WASHINGTON PARK, MARYLAND

SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) proposes to repair, stabilize, and rehabilitate Fort Washington, a large 19th century coastal fortification located at Fort Washington Park on the Maryland shore of the Potomac River. The park is located 11 miles south of Washington, D.C. and is administered as part of the NPS National Capital Parks East region. The park is comprised of 341 acres and its dominant feature is Fort Washington. The park was established to protect and interpret our nation's coastal defense system, and its primary purpose remains historic interpretation. The fort and many of its associated structures are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Fort Washington is in generally poor condition, resulting from long-term moisture intrusion and persistent vegetative growth on and into the stone, brick, and mortar façade. Under current management, the fort is repaired on an as-needed basis, with manual vegetation removal being an ongoing maintenance activity. In 1999, a section of the northwest demi-bastion wall collapsed; emergency repairs of this failure have recently been completed.

The preferred alternative would stabilize the fort and arrest those problems currently contributing to the deterioration of the historic structure. The project would address and correct problems in two phases. Phase 1 would address issues of wall stability and problems with the supporting drainage system. Phase 2 would stabilize supporting earthen terraces, slopes, structural buildings, and features. Vegetation encroachment that compromises the fort's integrity would also be removed under both phases.

This environmental assessment analyzes the impacts of continuing current management (Alternative A, the no action alternative) and of implementing a large-scale repair and rehabilitation program (Alternative B, the preferred alternative). The preferred alternative would protect historic structures, with few adverse effects to natural resources and to other cultural resources. This analysis has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), the National Park Service *Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision-making*, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.